

Important Information about Eating Seafood from New Bedford Harbor



Why should I worry about eating fish out of New Bedford Harbor?

As a result of historic dumping in the harbor, there are levels of a contaminant called PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) in fish and shellfish that pose a risk to human health.

What are PCBs and why do I care?

PCBs are a known cancer causing agent. Accumulation of PCBs in an individual's body over a number of years can lead to cancer and a number of other health effects. Fish and Shellfish in New Bedford Harbor have been sampled by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection since 1979 when state regulations put a prohibition on fishing/shellfishing in certain areas of the harbor.

PCBs belong to a broad family of man-made organic chemicals and were manufactured from 1929 until they were banned in 1979.

What has been done to inform people?

EPA has been working with the State and City of New Bedford to clean up the PCB contamination in New Bedford Harbor since the early 1980's. EPA coordinates regularly with the city and state and makes efforts to reach community members in a variety of ways. A Community Involvement Plan, finalized in 2015, outlines EPA's most recent efforts at outreach and can be found here <http://www2.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor>

How Can I Learn More?

Please visit our website

<http://www2.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor> or contact

Kelsey O'Neil, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator at

617-918-1003 or oneil.kelsey@epa.gov

Can I eat any fish out of New Bedford Harbor?

EPA has recommendations on how much seafood should be consumed for different ages and populations. To see those recommendations please contact the individuals below or visit our website at <http://www2.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor/fish-consumption-regulations-and-recommendations>

***Please also see maps on back page.

Will I be safe from PCBs if I follow the EPA recommendations?

Yes. The only way to avoid PCB contamination from New Bedford harbor is to avoid catching and eating fish out of the harbor. PCBs will not be removed from fish or shellfish through any cooking process. PCB's build up in your body over time and can lead to long term health effects.

Can I fish if I throw the fish back?

Yes. Catch and release is a welcome activity in New Bedford Harbor.








Since 1979, Massachusetts regulations have prohibited eating fish and/or shellfish caught in certain areas of New Bedford Harbor. The tables on this page show Massachusetts regulations and U.S. EPA recommendations for eating fish, shellfish and lobster caught in three fish closure areas around New Bedford Harbor.

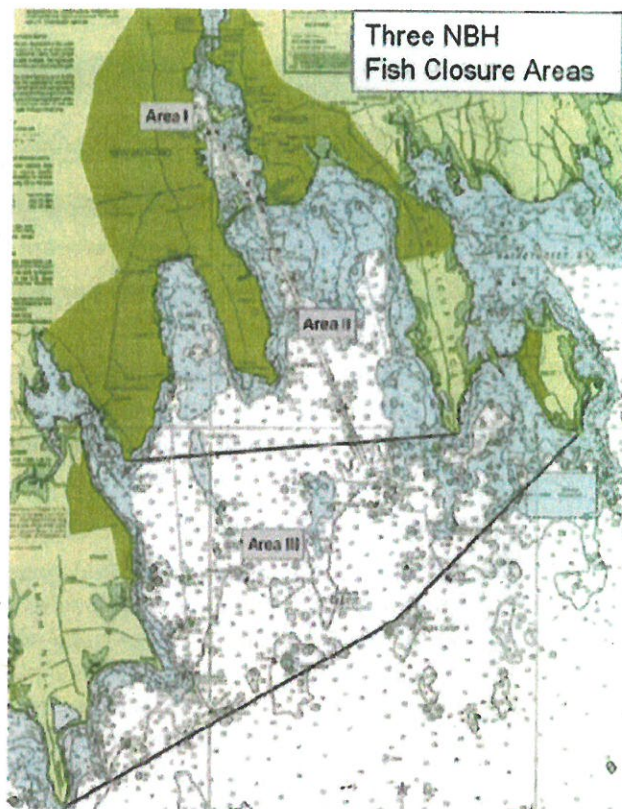
EPA's seafood consumption restrictions do not apply to seafood caught beyond the boundaries of the Site by the New Bedford area commercial fishing fleet. Exposure to PCBs is linked to infant development problems in children whose mothers were exposed to PCBs before becoming pregnant. Meal advice for PCB-contaminated fish is intended to protect children from developmental problems. PCBs also cause changes in human blood, liver, and immune function of adults. In addition, PCBs cause cancer in laboratory animals and may cause cancer in humans.

CLOSURE AREA 1*

If you catch...	then...
Any shellfish, lobster, or fish, including bottom feeders	Do not eat it

CLOSURE AREA 2*






If you catch...	then...
Fish:	
Black sea bass 	Eat no more than one meal per month
All bottom-feeding fish including:	
Eel 	Do not eat it
Flounder 	Do not eat it
Scup 	Do not eat it
Tautog 	Do not eat it
All other fish	U.S. EPA has no data yet so we cannot make a recommendation
Lobster	Do not eat it
Shellfish (clams, quahogs, mussels etc.)	Eat no more than one meal per month. Exception -- Shellfish caught in Clarks Cove: eat no more than one meal per week



Three NBH Fish Closure Areas

*More stringent recommendations for pregnant woman, nursing mothers, children under 12 or woman who may become pregnant can be found on EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor/fish-consumption-regulations-and-recommendations#Recommendations> and also included in this attachment.

CLOSURE AREA 3*

If you catch	then
Fish:	
Black sea bass 	Eat no more than one meal per month
Bottom-feeding fish:	
Eel 	There are no eating restrictions
Flounder 	There are no eating restrictions
Scup 	Do not eat it
Tautog 	There are no eating restrictions
All other fish, including all other bottom-feeders	U.S. EPA has no data yet so we cannot make a recommendation
Lobster	Do not eat it
Shellfish (clams, quahogs, mussels etc.)	There are no eating restrictions